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ABSTRACT

A study examined the impact of educational reforms on vocational agriculture programs in Tennessee. Questionnaires were mailed to all of the state's principals who had vocational agriculture programs in their high schools, agriculture teachers, and chairpersons of local advisory committees for vocational agriculture. Completed questionnaires were returned by 139 principals (72.4 percent), 131 teachers (55.7 percent), and 46 chairpersons (47.4 percent). Responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics and frequency distributions. According to the respondents, the positive impacts of national and state educational reforms outweighed the negative impacts. The reforms having the greatest positive impact included increases in teacher input into programs, tests, and materials; implementation of attendance policies; involvement of business, labor, and civic leaders in educational planning; increase in instruction in effective study and work skills; mandated curriculum guides for all subject areas; and counseling to improve students' self-esteem and achievement. The reforms having the greatest negative impact were college preparatory curricula mandated by the University of Tennessee Board of Trustees and the State Board of Regents, increased administrative and noninstructional burdens on teachers, and increases in the number of units or credits required for graduation. (MN)

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IMPACT OF EDUCATIONAL REFORMS ON VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS IN TENNESSEE

by
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INTRODUCTION

Since 1983, various widely publicized national reports on education have advocated a renewed emphasis on basic-skills and academic excellence. Both the basic skills movement and the academic-excellence movement emphasize various educational reforms (Tuttle, 1988). The proposed reforms appear to be having an impact on all areas of education.

Several states have passed legislation designed to reform their educational programs. In 1984, the Tennessee Legislature passed a reform package known as the "Better School Program". The heart of this program was a career ladder plan for teachers, basic skills pupil testing, and computer training before high school.

Reforms, while possibly good in themselves, probably have a positive impact on some instructional programs and a negative impact on others. The authors could find very little data on the impact of educational reforms on vocational agriculture programs. Hence, the authors sought to determine the impact of educational reforms on programs of vocational agriculture in Tennessee.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The study was designed to determine the impact of educational reforms on vocational agriculture programs in Tennessee as viewed by high school principals, teachers, and local chairpersons of advisory committees for agricultural education. The specific objectives were to:

(1) Identify educational reforms that have had a positive impact on local programs of vocational agriculture.

(2) Identify educational reforms that have had a negative impact on local

programs of vocational agriculture.

(3) Determine the impact educational reforms have had on selected components of local programs of vocational agriculture.

(4) Identify improvements in vocational agriculture that have resulted from implementation of educational reforms.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Advisory Committee or Council - a group of persons, usually from outside the field of education, selected because of their interest, knowledge, and expertise to advise educators regarding vocational agriculture programs.

Impact - the impinging of an educational reform (policy or practice) on programs of vocational agriculture.

Reform - a policy or practice designed to restore educational programs to a former and better state, including vocational agriculture.

Vocational agriculture - curriculum or program in agricultural education designed to offer students at the secondary level the opportunity to explore and prepare for agricultural occupations.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of literature revealed the importance and impact of educational reforms. Buzzell (1987) concluded that the image of vocational education has become a key issue on the agenda because times demand it. After pointing out that secondary schools are rated by the number of students they promote into higher education, Buzzell asked the question, "Does that make preparing students to enter the workforce less worthy?"

Tuttle (1988) pointed out that vocational educators cannot disagree with goals of the excellence-in-education movement and the basic-skills movement.

However, vocational educators must not concede their basic mission, which is to prepare students for employment. They must insist that excellence in education is more than a liberal arts agenda.

Bowen (1987) emphasized the need for reforms in vocational agriculture, when he concluded that declining enrollments in agricultural programs are being echoed all across the land. He stated that competitive instructional programs must be designed to attract today's students. The National Assessment of Vocational Education Staff (1988) documented the trend of declining enrollments. The Staff concluded that evidence from various studies indicated vocational education enrollments are declining faster than the general decline in the population of high school age students.

Knight (1987) felt that the difficult times experienced by farmers have caused them to advise their children not to enroll in agriculture courses. Another problem expressed by Knight is the sex stereotype issue--agriculture is primarily a male career.

Whittington (1987) expressed the idea of reforms in supervised occupational experience programs (SOEP's) to increase vocational agriculture enrollments. She wrote that SOEP's are excellent ways to fulfill students' needs.

Watras and Lasley (1987) seem to put the reform movement in perspective when they concluded that "true" reform will occur only through thoughtful dialogue, cautious optimism, and actions that are shaped through a merge of experience and research.

Although educators have, in the main, been committed to the reform movement, many agricultural educators in Tennessee and throughout the United States have begun to question the quality, quantity, and integral nature of specific reforms on vocational agriculture programs. In response to this

need, the researchers developed a study to determine the impact of educational reforms on vocational agriculture programs in Tennessee.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The population for this study consisted of all principals with vocational agriculture programs in their high schools, teachers of agriculture, and local chairpersons of advisory councils for vocational agriculture in Tennessee in 1987-88. In order to obtain the data, a demographic data questionnaire and a survey instrument were developed and refined by the Tennessee Joint Staff for Agricultural Education.

Names and addresses for principals and teachers were obtained from Mr. Kenneth K. Mitchell, State Consultant for Agricultural Education. The principals were asked to list on their survey instrument the name, address, and telephone number of the local advisory council chairperson. If a principal failed to provide this information, a telephone call was made to the office of the school superintendent to secure the name and address of the chairperson.

The survey instrument, a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope were mailed to 235 principals on February 23, 1988, and to 97 advisory council chairpersons on March 11, 1988, and on April 11, 1988. On April 11, 1988 and on May 2, 1988, follow-up letters were sent to each principal and chairperson who had not returned the instrument. The demographic data questionnaire and the survey instrument were administered to 100 teachers of vocational agriculture at the 60th State Future Farmers of America Convention in Gatlinburg on May 2, 1988. The other 135 teachers in the state were mailed the questionnaire, the instrument, a cover letter, and a self-addressed stamped envelope on May 11, 1988.

Approximately five days after mailing the demographic data questionnaire and the survey instrument, follow-up telephone calls were made to the teachers. (A copy of the demographic data questionnaire, the survey instrument and letters are in the appendix).

One hundred and thirty-nine principals (72.4 percent), 131 teachers (55.7 percent), and 46 chairpersons (47.4 percent) completed and returned the survey instrument. Responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics and frequency distributions.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This section presents the data that identify the three populations surveyed, the demographic data provided by the 131 teachers, and the total population's perceptions of the impact of educational reforms on vocational agriculture programs in Tennessee. The results are presented in Tables 1 through 17.

The number of principals, teachers, and chairpersons surveyed and the usable instruments/demographic questionnaires returned are shown in Table 1. A total of 524 individuals was surveyed, and 316, or 60.3 percent, returned usable instruments/questionnaires.

On the demograhic data questionnaire, the teachers were asked to indicate the current enrollment in their high schools. As shown in Table 2, the average high-school enrollment was 926 students. Twenty-four percent of the high schools had student enrollments between 301 and 600 students. However, eight percent of the schools enrolled less than 301 students. Only three percent of the high schools enrolled over 1,800 students.

The enrollment trends during the last four years in Tennessee high schools, as indicated by the teachers, are shown in Table 3. Approximately 40

Table 1

Principals, Teachers, and Chairpersons Surveyed

and Number Completing Instrument/Questionnaire

Population	Number Surveyed	Completed Instrument Questionnaire Number	Percent
High School Principals	192	139	72.4
Teachers of Vocational Agriculture	235	131	55.7
Chairpersons of Advisory Councils for Vocational Agriculture	97	46	47.4
Total	524	316	
Mean			60.3

Table 2

Enrollment of High Schools Offering Vocational Agriculture Programs in Tennessee, 1987-88

Enrollment	Number of Schools	Percent
300 or less students	10	7.6
301 to 600 students	32	24.4
601 to 900 students	28	21.4
901 to 1,200 students	22	16.8
1,201 to 1,500 students	21	16.0
1,501 to 1,800 students	14	10.7
Over 1,800 students	4	3.1
Total	131	100.0
Average Enrollment	926	

Table 3

Enrollment Trends During the Last Four Years in

High Schools Offering Vocational Agriculture in Tennessee

Enrollment Trends	Number of Schools	Percent
Constant enrollment	52	39.7
Increasing enrollment	40	30.5
Decreasing enrollment	37	28.2
Others	2	1.5
Total	131	100.0

percent of the schools reported a constant enrollment and 31 percent an increase enrollment. Twenty-eight percent of the high schools reported a decrease in enrollment during the last four years which seems to be a national trend in secondary education (National Assessment Staff, 1988).

The teachers indicated the number of vocational agriculture students taught daily in 1987-88. As shown in Table 4, the average number of students taught was 93.0. Forty-two percent of the teachers taught over 100 students per day, while 58 percent taught less than 100 students per day. The largest number of teachers, 39 or 30 percent taught between 101 and 120 students per day. A slightly smaller group of 37 teachers or 28 percent taught between 81 and 100 students per day.

The vocational agriculture enrollment trends experienced by the teachers during the last four years are summarized in Table 5. Thirty-six percent of the schools showed a decrease in enrollment, which seems to be a national trend in vocational agriculture, and 36 percent of the schools reported a constant enrollment. Never-the-less 26 percent of the schools showed an increase in vocational agriculture enrollment.

The teachers listed the percentages of their vocational agriculture students belonging to the Future Farmers of America (FFA) in 1987-88. The percentages are shown in Table 6. The average membership percentage for the State was 86.1. Approximately 44 percent of the schools had a 100 percent membership in the FFA. Forty percent of the schools reported an FFA membership between 99 and 60 percent and 16 percent reported a membership of less than 60 percent.

The trends in FFA membership during the last four years, as indicated by the teachers, are summarized in Table 7. Fifty-two percent of the teachers reported a constant membership during the last four years, while only 17

Table 4

Number of Vocational Agriculture Students

Taught Daily by Teachers, 1987-88

Number of Students	Number of Teachers	Percent
0-40 students	5	3.8
41-60 students	11	8.4
61-80 students	23	17.6
81-100 students	37	28.2
101-120 students	39	29.8
121-140 students	12	9.2
141-160 students	2	1.5
More than 160 students	2	1.5
Total	131	100.0
Mean	93.0 students	

Table 5

Enrollment Trends in Tennessee Vocational Agriculture Programs During the Last Four Years

Enrollment Trends	Number of Programs	Percent
Constant enrollment	47	35.9
Decreasing enrollment	47	35.9
Increasing enrollment	34	25.9
Others	2	1.5
No response	1	0.8
Total	131	100.0

Table 6

Percentage of Vocational Agriculture Enrollment

Belonging to the Future Farmers of America (FFA),
1987-88

Percent Members	Belong to FFA Number of Schools	Percent
100%	57	43.5
90 to 99%	25	19.1
80 to 89%	11	8.4
70 to 79%	7	5.3
60 to 69%	10	7.6
50 to 59%	9	6.9
Less than 50%	12	9.2
Total	131	100.0
Mean	86.1%	

Table 7

FFA Membership Trends in Tennessee Vocational Agriculture Programs During the Last Four Years

FFA Membership Trends	Number of Programs	Percent
Constant membership	68	51.9
Decreasing membership	40	30.5
Increasing membership	22	16.8
Others	1	0.8
Total	131	100.0

percent of the teachers reported an increase in membership. Almost 31 percent of the teachers indicated a decrease in membership, which is a national problem faced by the Future Farmers of America (Knight, 1987).

The high school principals, teachers of agriculture, and chairpersons of local advisory councils for vocational agriculture were asked to rate the impact of thirty-three educational reforms on a four point Likert scale. The scale was:

(1) SN - Strong negative impact (weaken vocational agriculture program)

(2) NI - Negative impact

(3) PI - Positive impact

(4) VP - Very positive impact (strengthen vocational agriculture program)

Using the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 on the rating scale, a weighted mean rating was calculated for each reform. To assist in interpreting the data, the reforms were grouped into three areas by the researchers. The three areas were (1) student reforms, (2) state and school district reforms, and (3) teacher education and certification reforms.

Impact of student reforms on local programs of vocational agriculture in Tennessee is shown in Table 8. Mean ratings of reforms that were rated by the respondents 2.50 or greater (or positive impact) were: "More instruction in effective study and work skills," (3.11); "Counseling to improve self-esteem and achievement of students," (3.04); "Objective grading scale based on measurable standards," (2.97); "State proficiency tests required for high school graduation," (2.88); "Opportunities for students to earn different types of diplomas," (2.68); "Revisions in disciplinary rules, based on recent court decisions, to meet the needs of disruptive students," (2.63); and

Table 8

Impact of Student Reforms on Local Programs of Vocational Agriculture in Tennessee

Reform	Number of Principals, Teachers and Chairpersons Rating Reform*				Number**		Mean Rating
	SN	NI	PI	VP	Not Applicable	No Response	
More instruction in effective study and work skills.	2	19	202	52	38	3	3.11
Counseling to improve self-esteem and achievement of students.	9	31	161	60	53	2	3.04
Objective grading scales based on measurable standards.	3	37	207	35	28	6	2.97
State Proficiency Test required for high school graduation.	11	50	171	40	28	16	2.88
Opportunities for students to earn different types of diplomas.	20	82	141	33	32	8	2.68
Revisions in disciplinary rules based on recent court decisions, to meet the needs of disruptive students.	28	81	123	38	43	3	2.63
Increased in the instructional time for special (slow learners and gifted) students.	17	92	143	24	38	2	2.63
Mainstreaming to meet the needs of handicapped students.	43	107	135	15	15	1	2.41

Table 8 - Continued

Reforms	Number of Principals, Teachers and Chairpersons Rating Reform*				Number**		Mean Rating
	SN	NI	PI	VP	Not Applicable	No Response	
Decrease in the amount of homework assigned to students.	15	125	79	7	86	4	2.35
Increase in time devoted to the basic academic subjects.	50	142	92	22	8	2	2.28
Increase in the number of units or credits required for graduation.	103	128	63	18	3	1	1.99
College preparatory curriculum recommented by the U.T. Board of Trustees and the State Board of Regents.	143	115	41	10	5	2	1.73

* Rating Scale:

(1) SN - Strong negative impact (weaken Vo-Ag program)
(2) NI - Negative impact
(3) PI - Positive impact
(4) VP - Very positive impact (strengthen Vo-Ag program)

** Non-respondents were not considered in computing mean ratings.

"Increase in the instructional time for special students," (2.63). Five student reforms were rated 2.49 or less (negative impact). These five reforms and mean ratings were: "College preparatory curriculum recommended by the University of Tennessee Board of Trustees and the State Board of Regents," (1.73); "Increase in the number of units or credits required for graduation," (1.99); "Increase in the time devoted to basic academic subjects," (2.28), "Decrease in the amount of homework assigned to students," (2.35); and "Mainstreaming to meet the needs of handicapped students," (2.41).

Table 9 shows the ratings of the principals, teachers, and chairpersons as to the impact of state and school district reforms on local vocational agriculture programs in Tennessee. They felt that nine reforms were having a positive impact (mean of 2.50 or greater) on local programs. These reforms and their mean rating were: "Increase in teacher input into programs, tests, and materials used in the school/classroom," (3.22); "Implementation of attendance policies to reduce absenteeism and tardiness," (3.19); "Involvement of business, labor, and civic leaders in educational planning," (3.17); "Reduction in the layers of administrative bureaucracy in public school systems, (3.09); "Implementation of alternative programs to meet the needs of continually disruptive students," (3.09); "Mandated curriculum guides for all subject areas," (3.04); "Establishment of individualized learning centers for failing students," (2.98); "Reorganization of school/classroom to expand instructional time," (2.92); and "Elimination of 'soft' or non-essential courses from the curriculum," (2.62). Only four state and school district reforms received negative impact ratings (2.49 or less)--"Offering more required courses and fewer elective courses," (1.77); "Increase in the administrative and non-instructional burdens on teachers," (1.92); "Increase length of minimum school day," (2.35); and "Increase length

Table 9

Impact of State and School District Reforms on Local Programs of Vocational Agriculture in Tennessee

Reform	Number of Principals, Teachers, and Chairpersons Rating Reform*				Number**		Mean Rating
	SN	NI	PI	VP	Not Applicable	No Response	
Increase in teacher input into programs, tests, and materials used in the school/ classroom.	3	15	182	85	29	2	3.22
Implementation of attendance policies to reduce absenteeism and tardiness.	7	26	166	96	20	1	3.19
Involvment of business, labor, and civic leaders in educational planning.	5	25	183	87	14	2	3.17
Reduction in the layers of administrative bureaucracy in public school systems.	9	19	168	60	56	4	3.09
Implementation of alternative programs to meet the needs of continually disruptive students.	13	34	136	84	47	2	3.09
Mandated curriculum guides for all subject areas.	7	35	198	61	12	3	3.04
Establishment of individualized learning centers for failing students.	4	28	160	32	89	3	2.98
Reorganization of school/classroom to expand instruction time.	6	35	164	28	79	4	2.92

Table 9 - Continued

Reform	Number of Principals, Teachers, and Chairpersons Rating Reform*				Number**		Mean Rating
	SN	NI	PI	VP	Not Applicable	No Response	
Elimination of "soft" or non-essential courses from the curriculum.	30	67	124	31	60	4	2.62
Increase length of minimum school year.	32	106	100	16	55	7	2.39
Increase length of minimum school day.	29	98	86	10	79	14	2.35
Increase in the administration and non-instructional burdens on teachers.	102	136	43	18	16	1	1.92
Offering more required courses and fewer elective courses.	123	138	36	9	9	1	1.77

* Rating Scale: (1) SN - Strong negative impact (weaken vo-ag program)
(2) NI - Negative impact
(3) PI - Positive impact
(4) VP - Very positive impact (strenghthen vo-ag program)

** Non-respondents were not considered in computing mean ratings.

of minimum school year," (2.39).

Teacher education and certification reforms were a major component of Tennessee's Better School Program. The impact of several of the reforms, as rated by the respondents, are summarized in Table 10. None of the teacher education and certification reforms received extremely, high or low ratings. The three positively rated (2.50 or greater) reforms were: "Increase in minimum college grade-point average for teacher certification," (2.79); "Increase in the in-service training requirements for professional improvement," (2.66); and "National Teacher Exam Core Battery required for teacher certification," (2.56). The five negatively scored (2.49 or less) reforms were: "Career ladder as a means of terminating incompetent teachers," (2.15); "Career ladder as a means of reducing teacher turnover," (2.21); "Career ladder as a means of recognizing and rewarding excellent teachers," (2.28); "Evaluation procedure for the career ladder program," (2.30); and "Career ladder program for teacher certification/recertification," (2.41).

The principals, teachers, and chairpersons rated the impact of the 33 educational reforms on selected components of local programs of vocational agriculture in Tennessee. A four-point Likert rating scale was utilized. Using the rating-scale numbers 1 through 4, a weighted mean was calculated for each program component. Seven of the components received a mean rating of 2.50 or greater, and seven received a mean rating of 2.49 or less. Table 11 shows impact of the reforms on components of the vocational agriculture programs. Positive impact ratings were received by the following components: "Greater opportunities for extended employment,"(3.12); "Increase in funds available for equipment and supplies", (2.98); "Greater utilization of advisory groups in planning and evaluating vocational agriculture/laboratory experiences," (2.96); "Increase in the involvement of FFA members in

Table 10

Impact of Teacher Education and Certification Reforms on

Local Programs of Vocational Agriculture in Tennessee

Reforms	Number of Principals, Teachers, and Chairpersons Rating Reform*				Number**		Mean Rating
	SN	NI	PI	VP	Not Applicable	No Response	
Increase in minimum college grade-point average for teacher certification.	13	60	171	27	40	5	2.79
Increase in the in-service training requirements for professional improvement.	26	75	168	27	17	3	2.66
National Teacher Exam Core Battery required for teacher certification.	31	74	137	20	50	4	2.56
Career ladder program for teacher certification/recertification.	50	92	122	23	23	6	2.41
Evaluation procedures for the career ladder program.	60	103	106	20	23	4	2.30
Career ladder as a means of recognizing and rewarding excellent teachers.	79	77	114	24	19	3	2.28
Career ladder as a means of reducing teacher turnover (number of teachers leaving the profession).	70	85	95	15	41	10	2.21
Career ladder as a means of terminating incompetent teachers.	75	85	82	16	49	9	2.15

Table 10 - Continued

Reforms	Number of Principals, Teachers, and Chairpersons Rating Reform*				Number**		Mean Rating
	SN	NI	PI	VP	Not Applicable	No Response	
Others	39	1	0	2	0	274	2.17

* Rating Scale: (1) SN - Strong negative impact (weaken VO-AG program)
(2) NI - Negative impact
(3) PI - Positive impact
(4) VP - Very positive impact (strengthen VO-AG program)

** Non-respondents were not considered in computing mean ratings.

Table 11

Impact of Education Reforms on Selected Components of Local Programs of Vocational Agriculture in Tennessee

Components of Program	Number of Principals, Teachers, and Chairpersons Rating Impact*				Number**		Mean Rating
	SN	NI	PI	VP	Not Applicable	No Response	
Greater opportunities for extended (summer) employment.	12	30	148	38	35	3	3.12
Increase in the funds available for equipment and supplies.	37	45	91	114	27	2	2.98
Greater utilization of advisory groups in planning and evaluating Vo-Ag programs.	9	40	189	47	29	2	2.96
Increase in the involvement of FFA members in activities and contests.	22	73	122	78	20	1	2.87
Increase in the time devoted to Vo-Ag laboratory experiences.	18	55	172	47	23	1	2.85
Increase in the various types of supervised occupational experiences available to students.	18	61	152	52	31	2	2.84
Increase the quality of students enrolled in vocational agriculture.	43	78	107	66	21	1	2.67
Decrease in the teacher time spent supervising occupational experience programs (SOEP's).	50	171	47	7	37	4	2.04
Decrease in the time devoted to Vo-Ag field trip experiences.	60	168	51	8	2	3	2.02

Table 11 - Continued

Components of Program	Number of Principals, Teachers, and Chairpersons Rating Impact*				Number**		Mean Rating
	SN	NI	PI	VP	Not Applicable	No Response	
Decrease in the number of agriculture classes offered to older and young (out of school) adults.	38	134	30	5	107	2	2.01
Decrease in the number of Vo-Ag students with supervised occupational experience programs (SOEP's).	57	170	46	5	36	2	2.00
Decrease in the number of Vo-Ag students joining the Future Farmers of America (FFA).	69	164	38	5	39	1	1.92
Decrease in the quality of Vo-Ag students joining the FFA.	94	145	44	6	24	3	1.87
Decrease in the funds available for professional travel.	93	150	31	10	29	3	1.85
Others	5	0	0	1	0	310	1.50

* Scale for rating degree of impact of reforms on components of program:
(1) SN - Strong negative impact
(2) NI - Negative impact
(3) PI - Positive impact
(4) VP - Very positive impact

** Non-respondents were not considered in computing mean ratings.

activities and contests," (2.87); "Increase in the time denoted to vocational agriculture/laboratory experiences," (2.85); "Increase in various types of supervised occupational experiences available to students," (2.84); and "Increase in the quality of students enrolled in vocational agriculture," (2.67). The Seven components that received negative impact ratings from the principals, teachers, and chairpersons were: "Decrease in funds available for professional travel," (1.85); "Decrease in the quality of vocational agriculture students joining the FFA," (1.87); "Decrease in the number of vocational agriculture students joining the FFA," (1.92); "Decrease in the number of vocational agriculture students with supervised occupational experience programs" (2.00); Decrease in the number of agriculture classes offered older and young out-of-school adults," (2.01); "Decrease in the time devoted to vocational agriculture field trip experiences," (2.02); and "Decrease in the teacher time spent supervising occupational experience programs," (2.04).

The principals, teachers, and chairpersons were requested to rate the degree of improvement they had experienced in their local programs by implementing proposed reforms for vocational agriculture. A five-point Likert scale was used by the respondents:

(1) NI - No improvement

(2) VLI - Very little improvement

(3) AI - Average improvement

(4) SI - Some improvement

(5) GI - Great improvement

Using the rating scale numbers 1 through 5, a weighted mean rating was calculated for each vocational agriculture reform.

The degrees of impact that the reforms for vocational agriculture had on

local programs are shown in Table 12. Except for reforms listed by only four respondents under, "others", the mean ratings for all reforms were above 3.00, indicating average or higher improvements in their programs of vocational agriculture. Reforms with mean rating above 3.00 were: "Seek approval of science credit for agricultural courses," (3.70); "Enhance the image of vocational agriculture to combat negative impressions of the farm crisis," (3.60); "Utilization of state curriculum guide to improve instruction," (3.59); "Assist counselors and administrators in their understanding of opportunities in agriculture," (3.57); "Implement active FFA alumni affiliates to support programs," (3.56); "Allow graduation credit for student supervised occupational experiences," (3.42); "Implement active recruitment programs for vocational agriculture," (3.41); Improve the quality of instruction in vocational agriculture," (3.37); "Offer semester vocational agriculture courses to allow more flexibility entry and exit," (3.35); "Change titles of vocational agriculture courses to improve image portrayed to students," (3.25); "More emphasis on basis skills in vocational agriculture," (3.17); and "Schedule seven-period day, allowing vocational agriculture students more flexibility in course selection," (3.08). Three of the reforms were rated as not applicable (not practiced) in several local programs. These reforms and percent of respondents rating each as not applicable were: "Scheduling seven-period day, allowing vocational agriculture students more flexibility in course selection," (40.2 percent); "Allows graduation credit for student supervised occupational experiences," (26.3 percent); and "Offer semester vocational agriculture courses to allow more flexibility entry and exit," (22.2 percent).

The high-school principals, vocational agriculture teachers, and advisory council chairpersons were asked to reply either "yes" or " no" to six

Table 12

Impact of Proposed Reforms for Improving Local

Programs of Vocational Agriculture in Tennessee

Reforms	Number of Principals, Teachers, and Chairpersons Rating Reform*					Number**		Mean Rating
	NI	VLI	AI	SI	GI	Not Applicable	No Reponse	
Seek approval of science credit for agriculture courses.	30	29	41	60	108	42	6	3.70
Enhance the image of vocational agriculture to combat negative impressions of the farm crisis.	17	38	76	95	80	7	3	3.60
Utilization of state curriculum guide to improve instuction.	10	36	88	111	64	5	2	3.59
Assist counselors and administrators in their understanding of opportunities in agriculture.	25	37	65	92	83	11	3	3.57
Implement active FFA alumni affiliates to support programs.	12	29	91	74	66	40	4	3.56
Allow graduation credit for student supervised occupational experiences.	26	28	59	58	59	83	3	3.42
Implement active recruitment programs for vocational agriculture.	25	49	71	95	64	7	5	3.41
Improve the quality of instruction in vocational agriculture.	22	39	98	104	46	4	3	3.37

Table 12 - Continued

Reforms	Number of Principals, Teachers, and Chairpersons Rating Reform*					Number**		Mean Rating
	NI	VLI	AI	SI	GI	Not Applicable	No Response	
Offer semester Vo-Ag courses to allow more flexibility in entry and exit.	25	37	61	67	53	70	3	3.35
Change titles of Vo-Ag courses to improve image portrayed to students.	34	45	74	60	60	39	4	3.25
More emphasis on teaching basic skills in vocational agriculture.	22	52	105	103	22	9	3	3.17
Schedule seven-period day, allowing Vo-Ag students more flexibility in course selection.	40	32	34	28	49	127	6	3.08
Others	4	0	0	0	0	312	0	1.00

* Rating Scale: (1) NI - No improvement
(2) VLI - Very little improvement
(3) AI - Average improvement
(4) SI - Some improvement
(5) GI - Great improvement

** Non-respondents were not considered in computing mean ratings.

questions related to agriculture and agricultural education. The six questions and the numbers of responses are listed in Table 13. Approximately 78 percent of the respondents answered "Yes" to the question, "Is the need for training in agriculture careers increasing?" and 60 percent answered "No" to the question, "Are the opportunities for employment in agriculture careers declining?" The question, "Has the recession resulted in a poor public image of agriculture?" was answered "yes" by 56 percent of the principals, teachers, and chairpersons, and the question, "Has the recession resulted in a positive public image of agriculture as a future career?" was answered "No" by 87 percent of the respondents. Fifty-three percent of the respondents stated "Yes" to the question, "Is the public attitude toward farming and agriculture positive?" However, another 53 percent answered "No" to the question, "Is the attitude of guidance counselors and school administrators toward agriculture positive?"

Table 14 shows the instructional areas that the principals, teachers and chairpersons included in their local programs of vocational agriculture. Areas listed by more than half of the respondents were agricultural science, agricultural mechanics, production agriculture, and ornamental horticulture. Forestry was listed as an instructional area by 28 percent of the respondents. Three areas were listed by less than one-fourth of the respondents. These areas were agricultural products, agricultural resources and conservation, and agricultural supplies, sales, and services.

Mean responses and differences between mean responses were determined for each of thirty-three educational reforms for local programs in agribusiness and production agriculture. Agribusiness programs involved combining the following five instructional areas: agricultural products, agricultural resources and conservation, forestry, ornamental horticulture, and

Table 13

Respondents' Answers to Questions Related to Agriculture and Agricultural Education

Questions	"Yes" Responses		"No" Responses	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Is the need for training in agriculture careers increasing?	244	78.5	67	21.5
Has the recession resulted in a poor public image of agriculture?	174	55.9	137	44.1
Is the public attitude toward farming and agriculture positive?	166	53.4	145	46.6
Is the attitude of guidance counselors and school administrators toward agriculture positve?	146	46.9	165	53.1
Are the opportunities for employment in agriculture careers declining?	124	40.0	186	60.0
Has the recession resulted in a positive public image of agriculture as a future career?	40	13.0	267	87.0

Table 14

Instructional Areas Included in Local Programs of Vocational Agriculture in Tennessee

Instructional Areas	Principals, Teachers, and Chairpersons Listing Area	
	Number	Percent
Agricultural Science	191	60.4
Agricultural Mechanics	188	59.5
Agricultural Production	181	57.3
Ornamental Horticulture	172	54.4
Forestry	88	27.8
Agricultural Supplies, Sales, and Services	73	23.1
Agricultural Resources and Conservation	67	21.2
Agricultural Products	57	18.0
Others	22	7.0

agricultural supplies, sales, and services. Production agriculture programs involved combining three areas--agricultural science, agricultural production, and agricultural mechanics. Major divisions used to group the thirty-three educational reforms were student reforms, state and school district reforms, and teacher education and certification reforms.

The significant differences between means were not calculated. Some of the differences between means for the agribusiness program and production agriculture program are small. Therefore, the reader should be cautioned in interpreting this section of the study.

The Impact of the reforms on high-school agribusiness and production agriculture programs in Tennessee, as indicated by the respondents, is shown in Table 15. In the division related to student reforms, agribusiness programs received an impact mean rating above 2.50 for seven of the twelve reforms and production agriculture programs received a similar rating for seven of the twelve reforms. However, the differences between means showed a higher impact rating for eleven of the twelve reforms for agribusiness programs.

Table 15 shows that for the division of state and school district reforms, both agribusiness and production agriculture programs were rated above 2.50 on nine of the thirteen reforms. The differences between means showed a higher impact rating for nine of the thirteen reforms in favor of agribusiness programs.

As previously pointed out in this report, none of the eight reforms related to the division of teacher education and certification received extremely high or low mean ratings. As shown in Table 15, only two of the eight reforms were rated above 2.50 for agribusiness programs and only three for production agriculture programs. However, the differences between means

Table 15

Impact of Educational Reforms on High-School Agribusiness and Production Agriculture Programs in Tennessee

Reforms	Mean Ratings* Agribusiness	Production Agriculture	Difference
I. STUDENT REFORMS			
College preparatory curriculum recommended by the U.T. Board of Trustees and the State Board of Regents.	1.76	1.67	0.09
Mainstreaming to meet the needs of handicapped students.	2.44	2.36	0.08
Increase in the number of units or credits required for graduation.	1.99	1.92	0.07
Counseling to improve self-esteem and achievement of students.	3.07	3.01	0.06
Increase in the instructional time for special (slow learners and gifted) students.	2.66	2.60	0.06
Increase in time devoted to the basic academic subjects.	2.30	2.26	0.04
State Proficiency Test required for high school graduation.	2.87	2.84	0.03

Table 15 - Continued

Reforms	Mean Ratings* Agribusiness	Production Agriculture	Difference
More instruction in effective study and work skills.	3.10	3.07	0.03
Opportunities for students to earn different types of diplomas.	2.68	2.66	0.02
Objective grading scales based on measurable standards.	2.98	2.96	0.02
Revisions in disciplinary rules, based on recent court decisions, to meet the needs of disruptive students.	2.66	2.65	0.01
Decrease in the amount of homework assigned to students.	2.31	2.37	-0.06
II. STATE AND SCHOOL DISTRICT REFORMS			
Increase in the administration and non-instructional burdens on teachers.	1.95	1.88	0.07
Reorganization of school/classroom to expand instruction time.	2.96	2.91	0.05
Increase length of minimum school year.	2.40	2.36	0.04
Mandated curriculum guides for all subject areas.	3.06	3.02	0.04

Table 15 - Continued

Reforms	Mean Ratings*		Difference
	Agribusiness	Production Agriculture	
Offering more required courses and fewer elective courses.	1.79	1.76	0.03
Implementation of alternative programs to meet the needs of continually disruptive students.	3.08	3.11	0.03
Involving business, labor, and civic leaders in educational planning.	3.18	3.16	0.02
Establishment of individualized learning centers for failing students.	2.98	2.96	0.02
Implementation of attendance policies to reduce absenteeism and tardiness.	3.17	3.16	0.01
Increase length of minimum school day.	2.34	2.34	0.00
Increase in teacher input into programs, tests, and materials used in the school/ classroom.	3.21	3.22	-0.01
Reduction in the layers of administrative bureaucracy in public school systems.	3.05	3.07	-0.02
Elimination of "soft" or non-essential courses from the curriculum.	2.58	2.63	-0.05

Table 15 - Continued

Reforms	Mean Ratings*		Difference
	Agribusiness	Production Agriculture	
III. TEACHER EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION REFORMS			
Evaluation procedures for the career ladder program	2.31	2.28	0.03
Career ladder as a means of reducing teacher turnover (number of teachers leaving the profession).	2.19	2.19	0.00
Career ladder program for teacher certification/recertification.	2.39	2.40	-0.01
National Teacheer Exam Core Battery required for teacher certification.	2.51	2.53	-0.02
Career ladder as a means of recognizing and rewarding excellent teachers.	2.24	2.26	-0.02
Increase in the in-service training requirements for professional improvement.	2.61	2.64	-0.03
Career ladder as a means of terminating incompetent teachers.	2.09	2.13	-0.04
Increase in minimum college grade-point average for teacher ceretification.	2.71	2.77	-0.06
Others	1.00	1.80	-0.80

Rating Scale: (1) SN - Strong negative impact (weaken Vo-Ag program)
(2) NI - Negative impact
(3) PI - Positive impact
(4) VP - Very positive impact (strengthen Vo-Ag program)

were higher for production agriculture programs on six of the eight reforms.

Impact of the thirty-three educational reforms on selected components of the agribusiness and production agriculture programs is summarized in Table 16. Seven of the fifteen components of agribusiness programs received positive mean scores above 2.50 and the same number of components of production agriculture programs score above 2.50. The differences between means were similar for the two programs. There were seven impact differences in favor of the agribusiness programs and seven in favor of the production agriculture programs.

Mean scores for the degree of improvement the respondents had experienced by implementing proposed reforms for vocational agriculture in their agribusiness and production agriculture programs are shown in Table 17. Twelve of the thirteen reforms in agribusiness programs received positive mean scores above 3.00 and eleven reforms in production agriculture programs received similar mean scores. However, the differences between means showed a higher degree of improvement in agribusiness for twelve of the thirteen reforms.

FINDINGS

The following findings are based on the preceeding data.

1. Average enrollment in 1987-88 for the high schools responding to the survey was 926 students. Average enrollment in the vocational agriculture programs was 93.0 students. Twenty-eight percent of the high schools and 36 percent of the vocational agriculture departments reported a decrease in enrollment over the last four years.

2. Average percentage of vocational agriculture students belonging to the Future Farmers of America (FFA) in 1987-88 was 86.1 percent. Thirty-one percent of the departments experienced a decrease in FFA memberships over the

Table 16

Impact of Educational Reforms on Selected Components of High School Agribusiness and Production Agriculture Programs in Tennessee

Selected Components	Mean Ratings*		Difference
	Agribusiness	Production Agriculture	
Increase the quality of students enrolled in vocational agriculture.	2.70	2.63	0.07
Decrease in the funds available for professional travel.	1.87	1.83	0.04
Decrease in the time devoted to Vo-Ag field trip experiences.	2.05	2.02	0.03
Decrease in the number of Vo-Ag students with supervised occupational experience programs (SOEP's).	2.01	1.99	0.02
Decrease in the teacher time spent supervising SOEP's.	2.04	2.02	0.02
Decrease in the number of agriculture classes offered to older and young (out of school) adults.	2.05	2.03	0.02
Decrease in the quality of Vo-Ag students joining the FFA	1.88	1.88	0.00
Decrease in the number of Vo-Ag students joining the Future Farmers of America (FFA).	1.92	1.93	-0.01

Table 16 - Continued

Selected Components	Mean Ratings* Agribusiness	Production Agriculture	Difference
Increase in the funds available for equipment and supplies.	2.94	2.95	-0.01
Greater opportunities for extended (summer) employment.	3.08	3.11	-0.03
Greater utilization of advisory groups in planning and evaluating Vo-Ag programs.	2.93	2.97	-0.04
Increase in the involvement of FFA members in activities and contests.	2.82	2.86	-0.04
Increase in the time devoted to Vo-Ag laboratory experiences.	2.81	2.86	-0.05
Increase in the various types of supervised occupational experiences available to students.	2.78	2.85	-0.07
Other	1.75	1.50	0.25

Rating Scale: (1) SN - Strong negative impact
(2) NI - Negative impact
(3) PI - Positive impact
(4) VP - Very positive impact

Table 17

Impact of Proposed Reforms for Improving High School Agribusiness and Production Agriculture Programs in Tennessee

Reforms	Mean Ratings*		Difference
	Agribusiness	Production Agriculture	
Change titles of Vo-Ag courses to improve image portrayed to students.	3.35	3.21	0.14
Offer semester Vo-Ag courses to allow more flexibility entry and exit.	3.43	3.32	0.11
Enhance the image of vocational agriculture to combat negative impressions of the farm crisis.	3.65	3.55	0.10
Allow graduation credit for student supervised occupational experiences.	3.47	3.37	0.10
Schedule seven-period day, allowing Vo-Ag students more flexibility in course selection.	3.08	2.99	0.09
Assist counselors and administrators in their understanding of opportunities in agriculture.	3.62	3.54	0.08
Improve the quality of instruction in vocational agriculture.	3.36	3.32	0.04

Table 17 - Continued

Reforms	Mean Ratings*		Difference
	Agribusiness	Production Agriculture	
Seek approval of science credit for agriculture courses.	3.73	3.70	0.03
Implement active recruitment programs for vocational agriculture.	3.43	3.41	0.02
Implement active FFA alumni affiliates to support programs.	3.57	3.55	0.02
Utilization of state curriculum guide to improve instruction.	3.57	3.56	0.01
More emphasis on teaching basic skills in vocational agriculture.	3.14	3.13	0.01
Others	1.00	1.00	0.00

Rating Scale: (1) NI - No improvement
(2) VLI - Very little improvement
(3) AI - Average improvement
(4) SI - Some improvement
(5) GI - Great improvement

last four years.

3. National and state educational reforms were having a more positive impact than a negative impact on local vocational agriculture programs. The reforms having the greatest positive impact were increase in teacher input into programs, tests, and materials used in the school/classroom; implementation of attendance policies to reduce absenteeism and tardiness; involvement of business, labor, and civic leaders in educational planning; increase in instruction on effective study and work skills; implementation of alternative programs to meet needs of continually disruptive students; reduction in the layers of administrative bureaucracy in public schools; mandated curriculum guides for all subject areas; and counseling to improve self-esteem and achievement of students.

4. The reforms having the greatest negative impact on local vocational agriculture programs were college preparatory curriculum mandated by the University of Tennessee Board of Trustees and the State Board of Regents; offering more required high-school courses and fewer elective courses; increase in the administration and non-instructional burdens on teachers; and increase in the number of units or credits required for graduation.

5. None of the reforms related to teacher education and certification received high positive or low negative ratings. The highest rated reforms dealt with increasing minimum college grade-point average for teacher certification and increasing in-service training requirement for professional improvement. The two lowest rated reforms dealt with the state career ladder program--career ladder as a means of reducing teacher turnover and career ladder as a means of terminating incompetent teacher.

6. National and state educational reforms were having a more postive impact than a negative impact on selected components of local programs of

vocational agriculture. The components receiving the highest positive impact ratings were greater opportunities for extended (summer) employment; increase in funds available for equipment and supplies; greater utilization of advisory groups in planning and evaluation programs; increase in the involvement of FFA members in activities and contests; and increase in various types of supervised occupational experiences available to students.

7. The vocational agriculture program components having the greatest negative impact ratings were a decrease in funds available for professional travel; decrease in the quality of vocational agriculture students joining the FFA; decrease in the number of vocational agriculture students joining the FFA; decrease in the number of vocational agriculture students with supervised occupational experience programs; and decrease in the number of agriculture classes for older and young out-of-school adults.

8. The degree of improvement resulting from implementation of national and state vocational agriculture reforms were rated average or higher. The reforms that contributed the greatest degree of improvement were seeking approval of science credit for agricultural courses; enhancing the image of vocational agriculture to counter negative impression of the farm crisis; utilizing state curriculum guides to improve instruction; implementing active FFA Alumni affiliates to support programs; and implementing active recruitment programs for vocational agriculture.

9. A majority of the respondents felt that the recession resulted in a poor public image of agriculture as a career, but that the public attitude toward farming and agriculture was positive. They indicated an increasing need for enlightening the public about agricultural career opportunities.

10. More than half of the respondents (53.1 percent) stated that the attitude of guidance counselors and school administrators toward agriculture

was negative.

11. Instructional areas included in more than 50 percent of the vocational agriculture programs were agricultural science, production, mechanics, and ornamental horticultural. Less than 25 percent of the programs included agricultural products, resources and conservation, and agricultural supplies, sales, and services.

12. The differences between means for agribusiness and production agriculture programs showed a higher impact rating for educational reforms in favor of agribusiness programs. The differences between means showed a higher degree of improvement in agribusiness programs than in production agriculture programs for the vocational agriculture reforms.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study suggest several implications for vocational agriculture programs in Tennessee. Some of the implications for the on-going programs are:

1. Local board of education and vocational education directors should:
   a. increase professional travel funds available to agriculture teachers,
   b. assist teachers in increasing the quantity and quality of students enrolled in vocational agriculture/FFA and in providing greater opportunities for supervised occupational experiences in agriculture, and
   c. evaluate the need for programs in vocational agribusiness education.
2. Teachers of agriculture in Tennessee should:
   a. study the agribusiness needs in their communities and develop new related instructional programs,
   b. implement strong vocational agriculture/FFA student recruitment

programs,

c. provide supervised occupational experiences for all students enrolled in vocational agriculture, and

d. implement public relations activities that will change the attitude of guidance counselors and school administrators toward vocational agriculture and gain their support for the program.

Implications of this study for State Agencies, Boards, and Colleges include:

1. The Tennessee Board of Education should evaluate the effect of the following regulations on vocational agriculture:

a. college preparatory curricular requirements,

b. number of units or credits required for high-school graduation, and

c. teacher education and certification requirements.

2. The State Division of Vocational Education should provide in-service training for teachers of agriculture on:

a. teaching courses for science credit,

b. utilizing state curriculum guides,

c. organizing and operating FFA alumni affiliates, and

d. implementing active recruitment programs for vocational agriculture/FFA.

3. The University of Tennessee and the State Universities and Community Colleges should analyze the impact of college preparatory requirements on student performance in higher educational programs in agriculture.

4. The State Legislature should revise the Tennessee career ladder program so that it will have a more positive impact on improving teacher performance in vocational agriculture.

5. Impact studies of educational reforms on other types of vocational education programs, as well as on academic programs, should be conducted.

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APPENDIX

COVER LETTER A

TENNESSEE TECH UNIVERSITY

Tennessee Technological University
College of Agriculture and Home Economics
Office of the Director . *School of Agriculture*
Box 5034 . Cookeville, TN 38505 . 615-372-3019

TO: High School Principals

FROM: Edwin E. Lamberth
Edwin E. Lamberth
Associate Professor

Ben L. Byler
Ben L. Byler
Director

DATE: February 23, 1988

SUBJECT: A Study of the Impact of Educational Reforms on Vocational Agriculture Programs in Tennessee

Since the release of the report, A Nation at Risk, the "back to the basics" and other reforms have occupied center stage in education. The reform movement is impacting all areas of education.

The State Department of Education has provided a grant to study the impact of educational reforms on programs of vocational agriculture in Tennessee. No research has been done concerning the impact of educational reforms on vocational agriculture in any of the states. The findings of our study should be helpful in improving vocational agriculture in Tennessee.

We need your help. Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to us by March 11, 1988. Your responses will be treated in a confidential manner. Individual responses by you or your school will not be identified in the research report. A self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed for returning the questionnaire.

We greatly appreciate your assistance in completing this important study.

EEL/kc
Enclosures

COVER LETTER B

TENNESSEE TECH UNIVERSITY

Tennessee Technological University
College of Agriculture and Home Economics
Office of the Director . *School of Agriculture*
Box 5034 . Cookeville, TN 38505 . 615-372-3019

TO: Advisory Council Chairperson

FROM: Edwin E. Lamberth, Associate Professor
Ben L. Byler, Director

DATE: March 11, 1988

SUBJECT: A Study of the Impact of Educational Reforms on Vocational Agricultural Programs in Tennessee

Since the release of the report, A Nation at Risk, the "back to the basics" and other reforms have occupied center stage in education. The reform movement is impacting all areas of education.

The State Department of Education has provided a grant to study the impact of educational reforms on programs of vocational agriculture in Tennessee. No research has been done concerning the impact of educational reforms on vocational agriculture in any of the states. The findings of our study should be helpful in improving vocational agriculture in Tennessee.

We need your help. Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to us by March 31, 1988. Your responses will be treated in a confidential manner. Individual responses by you or your school will not be identified in the research report. A self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed for returning the questionnaire.

We greatly appreciate your assistance in completing this important study.

EEL/tlr
Enclosures

COVER LETTER C

TENNESSEE TECH

Tennessee Technological University
College of Agriculture and Home Economics
School of Agriculture
Box 5034 . Cookeville, TN 38505 . 615-372-3019

TO: Advisory Council Chairperson

FROM: Edwin E. Lamberth — Ben L. Cyler

Edwin E. Lamberth
Associate Professor

Ben L. Cyler
Director

DATE: April 11, 1988

SUBJECT: A Study of the Impact of Educational Reforms on Vocational Agricultural Programs in Tennessee

Since the release of the report, A Nation at Risk, the "back to the basics" and other reforms have occupied center stage in education. The reform movement is impacting all areas of education.

The State Department of Education has provided a grant to study the impact of educational reforms on programs of vocational agriculture in Tennessee. No research has been done concerning the impact of educational reforms on vocational agriculture in any of the states. The findings of our study should be helpful in improving vocational agriculture in Tennessee.

We need your help. Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to us by April 25, 1988. Your responses will be treated in a confidential manner. Individual responses by you or your school will not be identified in the research report. A self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed for returning the questionnaire.

We greatly appreciate your assistance in completing this important study.

EEL/tlr
Enclosures

TENNESSEE TECH

COVER LETTER D

Tennessee Technological University
College of Agriculture and Home Economics
School of Agriculture
Box 5034 . Cookeville, TN 38505 . 615-372-3019

TO: Teachers of Vocational Agriculture

FROM: Edwin E. Lamberth — Edwin E. Lamberth, Associate Professor
Ben L. Byler — Ben L. Byler, Director

DATE: May 11, 1988

SUBJECT: A Study of the Impact of Educational Reforms on Vocational Agricultural Programs in Tennessee

Since the release of the report, A Nation at Risk, the "back to the basics" and other reforms have occupied center stage in education. The reform movement is impacting all areas of education.

The State Department of Education has provided a grant to study the impact of educational reforms on programs of vocational agriculture in Tennessee. No research has been done concerning the impact of educational reforms on vocational agriculture in any of the states. The findings of our study should be helpful in improving vocational agriculture in Tennessee.

Several teachers completed questionnaires at the State FFA Convention on May 2, 1988. If you did not complete one of the questionnaires at the Convention, would you please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to us by May 20, 1988. Your response will be treated in a confidential manner. Individual responses by you or your school will not be identified in the research report. A self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed for returning the questionnaire.

We greatly appreciate your assistance in completing this important study.

EEL/tlr
Enclosures

FOLLOW-UP LETTER A

TENNESSEE TECH UNIVERSITY

Tennessee Technological University
College of Agriculture and Home Economics
School of Agriculture
Box 5034 . Cookeville, TN 38505 . 615-372-3019

TO: High-School Principals and Advisory Council Chairpersons

FROM: Ben L. Byler, Director BB
Edwin E. Lamberth, Associate Professor EEL
School of Agriculture

DATE: April 11, 1988

SUBJECT: A Study of the Impact of Educational Reforms on Vocational Agricultural Programs in Tennessee

A few days ago, we mailed you a letter and a questionnaire concerning your evaluations of the impact of educational reforms on Vocational Agriculture programs in Tennessee. Our latest count did not include your returned questionnaire.

The impact study we are undertaking is very important to the State Department of Education and the future of Vocational Agriculture. Your response is essential if the study is to be meaningful.

For your convenience, we enclosed another impact questionnaire and a self-addressed envelope. Would you please take a few minutes to fill out the questionnaire and return it to us by April 25, 1988? Thank you for helping us.

EEL/tlr

Enclosures

FOLLOW-UP LETTER B

TENNESSEE TECH

Tennessee Technological University
College of Agriculture and Home Economics
School of Agriculture
Box 5034 . Cookeville, TN 38505 . 615-372-3019

TO: High-School Principals and Advisory Council Chairpersons

FROM: Ben L. Byler, Director BB
Edwin E. Lamberth, Associate Professor EEL
School of Agriculture

DATE: May 2, 1988

SUBJECT: A Study of the Impact of Educational Reforms on Vocational Agricultural Programs in Tennessee

A few days ago, we mailed you a letter and a questionnaire concerning your evaluations of the impact of educational reforms on Vocational Agriculture programs in Tennessee. Did you complete and return the questionnaire? If so, let us express our appreciation for your time and effort.

A few principals and council chairpersons have not completed the questionnaire. For your convenience, we have enclosed another impact questionnaire and a self-addressed envelope. Would you please take a few minutes to fill out the questionnaire and return it to us by May 13, 1988? Your responses are essential if the study is to be meaningful.

Your prompt attention to this request will be greatly appreciated. Thanks for your help.

EEL/tlr
Enclosures

SURVEY INSTRUMENT/DEMOGRAPHIC
DATA QUESTIONNAIRE

IMPACT OF EDUCATIONAL REFORMS ON VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS IN TENNESSEE

A Survey of Teachers of Agriculture, High School Principals, and Chairpersons of Local Advisory Councils

An opportunity for you to assist in improving vocational agriculture

A research project sponsored jointly by the
School of Agriculture
College of Agriculture and Home Economics
Tennessee Technological University
Cookeville, Tennessee 38505
and
Division of Vocational Education
Tennessee Department of Education
Nashville, Tennessee 37219

Impact of Educational Reforms on Vocational Agricultural Programs in Tennessee

School System _____

Teacher Demographic Data

Part I.

_____ 1. How many students are currently enrolled in your school

(1) 300 or less
(2) 301 to 600
(3) 601 to 900
(4) 901 to 1,200
(5) 1,201 to 1,500
(6) 1,501 to 1,800
(7) 1,801 to 2,100
(8) 2,101 to 2,400
(9) 2,401 to 2,700
(10) over 2,700

_____ 2. During the last four years has the number of students in your school:

(1) increased
(2) decreased
(3) remained constant
(4) other (specify) _____

_____ 3. How many vo-ag students do you teach each day?

(1) 0-40
(2) 41-60
(3) 61-80
(4) 81-100
(5) 101-120
(6) 121-140
(7) 141-160
(8) more than 160

_____ 4. During the last four years has the number of vo-ag students in your school:

(1) increased
(2) decreased
(3) remained constant
(4) other (specify) _____

_____ 5. What percentage of your current vo-ag enrollment belongs to the FFA?

(1) 100%
(2) 90%-99%
(3) 80%-89%
(4) 70%-79%
(5) 60%-69%
(6) 50%-59%
(7) less than 50%

_____ 6. During the last four years has the percentage of vo-ag students belonging to the FFA:

(1) increased
(2) decreased
(3) remained constant
(4) other (specify) _____

PART II. The issue of educational reforms is current and critical in our state and nation. The reforms, while possibly good in themselves, are impacting either directly or indirectly on programs of vocational agriculture.

Indicate the degree of (positive or negative) impact each of the following reforms are having on your local program of vocational agriculture. Using the scale below, please check (✓) the appropriate scale value or N/A in each column.

SN- Strong negative impact (weaken vo-ag program)
NI- Negative impact
PI- Positive impact
VP- Very positive impact (strengthen vo-ag program)
N/A- Not applicable (not practiced in local school)

	(1) SN	(2) NI	(3) PI	(4) VP	(5) N/A
(1) State Proficiency Test required for high school graduation.					
(2) Increase in the number of units or credits required for graduation.					
(3) College preparatory curriculum recommended by the U.T. Board of Trustees and the State Board of Regents.					
(4) Counseling to improve self-esteem and achievement of students.					
(5) Opportunities for students to earn different types of diplomas.					
(6) Increase in time devoted to the basic academic subjects.					
(7) Decrease in the amount of homework assigned to students.					
(8) More instruction in effective study and work skills.					
(9) Revisions in disciplinary rules, based on recent court decisions, to meet the needs of disruptive students.					

	(1) SN	(2) NI	(3) PI	(4) VP	(5) N/A
(10) Mainstreaming to meet the needs of handicapped students.					
(11) Increase in the instructional time for special (slow learners and gifted) students.					
(12) Objective grading scales based on measurable standards.					
(13) Increase length of minimum school year.					
(14) Increase length of minimum school day.					
(15) Mandated curriculum guides for all subject areas.					
(16) Elimination of "soft" or non-essential courses from the curriculum.					
(17) Offering more required courses and fewer elective courses.					
(18) Involving business, labor, and civic leaders in educational planning.					
(19) Establishment of individualized learning centers for failing students.					
(20) Reorganization of school/classroom to expand instruction time.					
(21) Implementation of alternative programs to meet the needs of continually disruptive students.					
(22) Increase in the administration and non-instructional burdens on teachers.					
(23) Implementation of attendance policies to reduce absenteeism and tardiness.					
(24) Reduction in the layers of administrative bureaucracy in public school systems.					
(25) Increase in teacher input into programs, tests, and materials used in the school/ classroom.					

	(1) SN	(2) NI	(3) PI	(4) VP	(5) N/A
(26) Career ladder program for teacher certification/recertification.					
(27) Evaluation procedures for the career ladder program.					
(28) Increase in the in-service training requirements for professional improvement.					
(29) Increase in minimum college grade-point average for teacher certification.					
(30) National Teacher Exam Core Battery required for teacher certification.					
(31) Career ladder as a means of recognizing and rewarding excellent teachers.					
(32) Career ladder as a means of terminating incompetent teachers.					
(33) Career ladder as a means of reducing teacher turnover (number of teachers leaving the profession).					

(34) (Others-list and rate) _____

_____.

(35) _____

_____.

(36) _____

_____.

PART III. Using the rate scale below, indicate the degree of impact that the above reforms are having on the following phases of your local program of vocational agriculture by checking (✓) the appropriate column.

SN- Strong negative impact
NI- Negative impact
PI- Positive impact
VP- Very positive impact
N/A- Not applicable

	(1) SN	(2) NI	(3) PI	(4) VP	(5) N/A
(37) Increase the quality of students enrolled in vocational agriculture.					
(38) Decrease in the number of vo-ag students joining the Future Farmers of America (FFA).					
(39) Decrease in the quality of vo-ag students joining the FFA.					
(40) Increase in the involvement of FFA members in activities and contests.					
(41) Decrease in the number of vo-ag students with supervised occupational experience programs (SOEP's).					
(42) Increase in the various types of supervised occupational experiences available to students.					
(43) Decrease in the teacher time spent supervising SOEP's.					
(44) Increase in the time devoted to vo-ag laboratory experiences.					
(45) Decrease in the time devoted to vo-ag field trip experiences.					
(46) Greater utilization of advisory groups in planning and evaluating vo-ag programs.					
(47) Decrease in the number of agriculture classes offered to older and young (out of school) adults.					
(48) Increase in the funds available for equipment and supplies.					
(49) Decrease in the funds available for professional travel.					
(50) Greater opportunities for extended (summer) employment.					

(51) (Others-list and rate) _____

_____.

_____

PART IV. Below are state and national reforms that have been proposed to improve vocational agriculture programs. Indicate the degree of improvement you are experiencing in your local program by checking (✓) the approved column.

NI- No improvement
VLI- Very little improvement
AI- Average Improvement
SI- Some improvement
GI- Great improvement
N/A- Not applicable

	(1) NI	(2) VLI	(3) AI	(4) SI	(5) GI	(6) N/A
(52) Improve the quality of instruction in vocational agriculture.						
(53) More emphasis on teaching basic skills in vocational agriculture.						
(54) Implement active recruitment programs for vocational agriculture.						
(55) Schedule seven-period day, allowing vo-ag students more flexibility in course selection.						
(56) Offer semester vo-ag courses to allow more flexibility entry and exit.						
(57) Change titles of vo-ag courses to improve image portrayed to students.						
(58) Assist counselors and administrators in their understanding of opportunities in agriculture.						
(59) Enhance the image of vocational agriculture to combat negative impressions of the farm crisis.						
(60) Allow graduation credit for student supervised occupational experiences.						
(61) Seek approval of science credit for agriculture courses.						
(62) Utilization of state curriculum guide to improve instruction.						
(63) Implement active FFA alumni affiliates to support programs.						

(64) (Others-list and rate) _____

_____.

_____

PART V. Answer the following six questions related to agriculture and agricultural education using the following scale. Write the number of your answer in the blank.

(1)- Yes
(2)- No

_____ (65) Is the public attitude toward farming and agriculture positive?

_____ (66) Has the recession resulted in a poor public image of agriculture?

_____ (67) Has the recession resulted in a positive public image of agriculture as a future career?

_____ (68) Are the opportunities for employment in agriculture careers declining?

_____ (69) Is the need for training in agriculture careers increasing?

_____ (70) Is the attitude of guidance counselors and school administrators toward agriculture positive?

PART VI. What program areas are you currently teaching in your local program of vocational agriculture? (check areas)

_____ (71) Agricultural Science

_____ (72) Agricultural Production

_____ (73) Agricultural Supplies, Sales, and Services

_____ (74) Agricultural Mechanics

_____ (75) Agricultural Products

_____ (76) Ornamental Horticulture

_____ (77) Agricultural Resources and Conservation

_____ (78) Forestry

_____ (79) Other (specify)_____

_____

List below the name, address, and the phone number of the chairperson of your advisory council or committee for vocational agriculture.

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Phone ( ) _____